Perspectives on Human Communication
COMM 1210-100, Fall 2010

M/W 2:00-2:50 (CHEM 140); plus once weekly recitation

Course Instructors (offices/office hours follow—others by appointment)

Professor Peter Simonson (peter.simonson@colorado.edu); Hellems 95/M 12-1:30, T 8:30-9:45
Natalie Grecu, Lead Teaching Assistant (natalie.grecu@colorado.edu); Hellems 65/M 1-2, F 10-11
Meghan Dunn (meghan.m.dunn@colorado.edu); Hellems 95/M 3-4, W 12:45-1:45
Katie Harris (katherine.l.harris@colorado.edu); Hellems 10/M 3-3:50, W 1-1:50
Jessica Jimenez (jessica.m.jimenez@colorado.edu); Hellems 14/W 12-1, Th 1-2
Jorge Lizarzaburu (jorge.lizarzaburu@colorado.edu); Hellems 14/W 11:30-12:30, Th 2-3
Kristina Ruiz-Mesa (kristina.ruizmesa@colorado.edu); Hellems 14/W 12:30-1:30, Th 10:30-11:30

Communicating with the Instructors: You can communicate with us face-to-face or via e-mail. Besides our office hours, we will generally be available before and after class in or outside CHEM 140. If you have an e-mail question, contact your recitation instructor first, though their CU address above (i.e. not through the CULearn/Blackboard website). Don’t expect an immediate response, but they will try to get back to you within 24 hours during the week (on weekends and holidays it is likely to be longer).

The Course

Communication and its media have created new worlds for us, and we only partly understand what we’re doing in them. These worlds condition the way we feel, think, and relate to others—as communicative environments have done for as long as life has existed. We need to try to understand those environments better, our places in them, and our ways of producing and reproducing communication at this time in history. Our lives depend on it.

This course provides an introduction to communication as a way of thinking about and living in the world. It also introduces communication as a discipline and interlocking fields of study. We will read from both classic and contemporary writings to make sense of communication as a discrete event, ongoing social process, and cultivated art that can be directed toward all kinds of human purposes. In the process of learning key concepts and theories, emphasis is placed on developing reflective self-awareness about the communication that we participate in and wider-ranging curiosity and care for the communicative lives of others. In the process, we will consider a range of embodied and
technologically mediated forms of communication cutting across interpersonal, organizational, and public settings and relationships.

The first half of the course will chart different ideas and perspectives on communication in general, looking back to influential ancient views, classic twentieth-century authors, and important contemporary understandings. Across the first seven weeks, we will focus particularly on the way that communication can create individual and social realities. Following the midterm, we will turn to questions of self, others, and community in the contemporary world, and sample representative ways of considering those issues from communicative perspectives. Instead of trying to give an overview of communication studies writ large, we will focus on specific, empirical studies of interpersonal, intercultural, organizational, group, rhetorical, and mass-mediated communication. The aim is both to apply general conceptual frameworks developed in the first half of class and to see particular ways that students of communication think about and investigate the world.

**Goals for Students**

The course is designed to promote the following outcomes for students:

1. To consider the world from communicative points of view; identify key components of particular communicative processes and events; and develop more reflective and articulate ways of interpreting, evaluating, responding to, and creating communication in your own lives.
2. To improve your ability to read scholarly literature, explain key ideas and terms, apply them to real-world examples, and differentiate approaches and perspectives to the study of communication.
3. To develop habits of reflective awareness about communication that can enrich your everyday experience, help you negotiate it, and improve your ability to intelligently consider the communicative lives of nearby and distant others.

**Assignments and Exams**

- **Weekly Individual Assignments** 25%
  *See handout: Readings and Reading Questions*

- **Group Work (in lecture and recitation)** 15%
  *See handout: Groups and Group Work*

- **Practice Exam** 5%

- **Midterm Exam (2 days; multiple choice and short answer)** 25%

- **Final Exam (multiple choice and short answer)** 30%
  *Review Sheets will be distributed before each exam.*
Readings and Course Materials

Readings: As a way of both encouraging independent thought and reading practices—as well as saving students $70 or more—we won’t be using a textbook for this class. Instead, we have selected individual readings, all of which are available through CULearn or the University’s Chinook Library System. If you are using the latter from off campus, you will need to make sure that your VPN Client is turned on. (If you need VPN software, visit [http://www.colorado.edu/its/vpn/clients.html](http://www.colorado.edu/its/vpn/clients.html).

Print off hard copies of all assigned readings and keep them in a three-ring binder or folder with your graded Reading Questions and class notes. Bring it to every lecture and recitation. We will be working from the texts, which we want you to read carefully, mark up, and make notes on. If you don’t have the readings with you, you can’t fully participate in recitation and lecture. We reserve the right to conduct spot checks to make sure you have them. (For more information, see Readings and Reading Questions handout)

Simonson’s lectures will be video recorded and posted on course reserves through the library’s website. Allow the technology people 2-3 days for a lecture to appear on the site. The camera will be focused on Simonson, but students may occasionally get included in the frame. If you have any objections to appearing in passing on the video, please contact Simonson in the first week of class.

You also need an iClicker for the course. (Once you have one, you must register it through CUConnect.)

Two Notes on Grading

1. Philosophy. Your instructors are ‘old school.’ ‘C’ stands for ‘competent,’ as in ‘displayed competent knowledge of the materials and skills, and completed the assignments satisfactorily.’ ‘B’ means that you have gone significantly beyond basic competence; while ‘A’ indicates a superior answer, displaying both excellent understanding of the material and evidence of independent thought. We uphold high standards as a way to help bring out your best thinking and writing, and reward true excellence.

2. Mechanics. We will be entering your grades on CU Learn. It is your responsibility to monitor the grades that are recorded there and make sure they accord with the grade you received on the assignment or exam. We are very careful when we grade and enter scores, but occasionally a mistake occurs. If you find a discrepancy between your posted grade and the one written on your homework or exam, you need to let your TA know within 10 days after the assignment is returned. Grades will not be changed except in cases where there was an error in recording, computation, or application of course grading rubrics.
If You Want to Do Well in this Class....

Be Prepared: Give yourself enough time to do a thorough job on the readings and Reading Questions. They count for 20% of your final grade, and they prepare you for exams. Do all of them, do them carefully, and bring the original readings to class with you for discussion. Stay on top of the material; there is a lot of it, and cramming does not work for the exams.

Be Present: If you’re not present, you lose the benefit of learning through examples, problem solving, live thinking, and other ‘active learning.’ Unless you are remarkably talented, your exam grade will suffer. Even if you are remarkably talented, you will still lose a chance to learn more, and find ways to make course material applicable to your own life. You will be asked to sit with your group during lecture, and each day given a participation sheet to fill out during structured discussion moments. Being present in both lecture and recitation counts toward 5% of your final grade (see Groups and Group Projects handout).

Consider this Advice from Students in a Be Engaged: Learning is an active process. It is marked by physical and cognitive engagement. Listen carefully in class. Stay involved by taking notes, both of what is said, and of things that cross your mind during lecture and discussion. Be active in recitation and lecture discussions. To help you stay engaged, avoid distracting people around you, and explore the world of the spoken word, students will not be permitted to use laptops, cell phones, or other portable electronic devices in class. (Exceptions to the laptop rule will be made if students have registered a learning difference with CU’s Disability Services Office. Please talk with Simonson in the first week of school).

previous lecture course taught by Simonson:

“Do not let yourself fall behind.”
“Attend all classes so you don’t fall behind. Each class period is crucial to achieving full understanding of the material.”
“Come to every lecture, participate in discussion during the lecture, and study for the exams with a group”
“Complete all homework assignments, which are extremely helpful in learning the material and provide a great study guide for the exams.”
“Absolutely take the time to complete the homework reading questions and work hard on them in order to get a good homework grade and be prepared for the exams.”
“Read, take notes in class, and study regularly through the semester. Don’t wait till the last couple nights to study for the exams.”
“Study early for the exams.”
“Go into the course expecting a challenge, and study a lot for the exams if you want a good grade. The cliché that ‘you get out what you put in’ is certainly true of this course. As long as I stayed engaged and on top of lecture and reading questions, I did well.”
Alternate-Date and Makeup Exams

Alternate-date and makeup exams will be given only:
   a) If the student is required to attend an officially sanctioned athletic event as a participant and notifies the instructor in advance.
   b) In cases of a religious observance where the instructor is notified in advance.
   c) In cases of documented serious illness.
   d) In cases of a documented family emergency.
   e) In cases of a documented legal obligation that cannot be adjusted (e.g. court appearances)

Students with Special Needs

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please give Simonson a letter from Disability Services as soon as possible so that your needs may be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact: 303-492-8671, Willard 322, and www.Colorado.EDU/disabilityservices. If accommodation includes the need to take notes on a laptop computer during class, please let us know immediately.

Maintaining a Civil Classroom Environment

We will be talking about issues and ideas that can make a difference in all of our lives. To do that well, we need to be respectful of one another. We all have that responsibility. Students who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Faculty have the professional responsibility to treat all students with understanding, dignity and respect, to guide classroom discussion and to set reasonable limits on the manner in which they and their students express opinions. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. We will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. The UC-Boulder policy on Discrimination and Harassment (http://www.colorado.edu/policies/discrimination.html) and the University of Colorado policy on Sexual Harassment and the University of Colorado policy on Amorous Relationships applies to all students, staff and faculty. Any student, staff or faculty member who believes s/he has been the subject of discrimination or harassment based upon race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Judicial Affairs at 303-492-5550. Information about the ODH and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding discrimination or harassment can be obtained at http://www.colorado.edu/odh
**Plagiarism and Other Cheating**

We take cheating seriously—on exams, and with Reading Questions. All students are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic, dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council (303-725-2273; honor@colorado.edu). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). **For information on following the Honor Code with Reading Questions, see that handout.**

Other information can be found at [http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html](http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html) & [http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/](http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/).
Class Schedule

All reading and accompanying Reading Questions (RQs) need to be completed by Monday of the week they are listed. Unless otherwise noted, readings are available through CULearn, and you should complete them in the order listed. Typed and printed RQs are due to your TA at the beginning of lecture of Monday.

INTRODUCTION


Readings:
- Class Document: “Communication as Event, Process, and Art”

CREATING AND MANAGING WORLDS: ANCIENT UNDERSTANDINGS OF SPEECH AND RHETORIC

Week Two (8/30-9/1): Biblical and Civic Humanist Understandings of Logos (and Anti-Logos)

Readings:
- Michael Billig, “Protagoras and the Origins of Rhetoric”

Week Three (9/8, no class 9/6—Labor Day): Aristotle’s Rhetoric: An Art of Studying and Performing Speech

Readings
- Course Document: Aristotle, On Rhetoric, excerpts

Practice Exam in Recitation this Week

COMMONALITY AND DIFFERENCE: DISCOVERING “COMMUNICATION” IN AN AGE OF NEW MEDIA

Week Four (9/13-15): “Communication” as a word, idea, and field

Readings
online through Chinook Library Catalog. If off campus, make sure your VPN device is activated]

- Charles Horton Cooley, excerpts on communication and words from Social Organization (1909)

Week Five (9/20-22): Communication and Difference: Two Classic Views

Readings
- W.E.B. DuBois, excerpts from The Souls of Black Folk (1903), including Introduction to Oxford World’s Classics edition
- Mary Parker Follett, “Constructive Conflict” (1926)

THEORIZING COMMUNICATION: CULTURAL AND CONSTRUCTIVIST APPROACHES

Week Six (9/27-29): Communication, Culture, and Constructivism

Readings
- James W. Carey, “A Cultural Approach to Communication”

Week Seven (10/4-10/6): Schemas and Metaphors

Readings
- George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, excerpts from Metaphors We Live By [CULearn]
- University of Colorado Honor Code (www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/)

Midterm Review Session/Application Exercise Wednesday 10/6

Week Eight (10/11-13): FIRST EXAM (two class periods)
EMBODIED SELVES, DISCOURSES, AND IDENTITIES IN OUR GLOBALIZED WORLDS


- Note: This week’s reading is divided up: do the first and its Reading Questions for Monday, the second for Wednesday (each count ½ of RQ grade for this week)

Readings:
- Charles Lemert and Anthony Elliot, *Deadly Worlds: The Emotional Costs of Globalization*, 1-37 (Monday)
- Richard Shusterman, “Thinking through the Body, Educating for the Humanities” (Wednesday)

Week Ten (10/25-27): “Possible Selves” and Communicative Life

Reading:

Week Eleven (11/1-3): Discourse and Identity in Organizational Settings

Reading:

LIVING WITH OTHERS

Week Twelve (11/8-10): Communicating across Differences in Face-to-Face Encounters

Readings:
- Mark P. Orbe and Regina E. Spellers, “From the Margins to the Center: Utilizing Co-Cultural Theory in Diverse Contexts” (CULearn PDF)
Week Thirteen (11/15-17): Representing Different Identities in Popular Media

Readings:

FALL BREAK (11/22-24)

Week Fourteen (11/29-12/1): Community and Shunning in Group and Organizational Life

Readings:

Week Fifteen (12/6-12/8): Critically Evaluating a Social Movement: Bringing the Semester Together through a Case Study in Media Activism

Reading:
- Website to study, TBA

Exam Review/Application Exercise: Wednesday 12/8

FINAL EXAM: Monday, December 13, 1:30-4:00 p.m.